

Why Go Easy Hiking in Germany

By Michael, October 2, 2010



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Germany is Europe's most underrated tourist destination

This is just another way of saying Germany is simply not sexy. It is terminally uncool, near the bottom of the European razzle-dazzle league, somewhere alongside Belgium or Finland. If you don't believe me, just conduct a simple experiment.

Tell your friends you are going on a holiday, and when they ask you where, say "To Germany." They will most likely look at you, not exactly shocked or puzzled (to get that type of reaction, you have to say something like North Korea or Zimbabwe) but certainly waiting for an explanation.

You simply don't get that look when you tell them you are going to France. Or Spain. Or Norway, for crying out loud.

Why is that so?

Germany's not totally undeserved reputation for earnestness and hard work certainly does not help and neither does the Germans' alleged inability to see the funny side of just about anything, including themselves. No, make that *particularly* themselves.

Or their reluctance to admit that their opposite number in a debate may also have a point, occasionally, once in a million years, *ever*.

But, hey, I am not going to ask you to move to Germany for good. Or fall in love with it. I am not even asking you to like it. Just to hike it. (And to vote for me in this year's Most Painful Pun Competition.)

Whatever you may say about Germany, it is a paradise for easy hiking

1. German hiking trails



They are true wonders of organization, well marked – the best ones have a clearly visible logo posted somewhere on a tree every quarter mile or so – and sub-divided into perfectly portioned, bite-sized stages of between ten and fifteen miles that take you from one country town to another. **They are the *autobahns* of hiking.**

2. German villages

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Because the country is so densely populated, there is always a village somewhere near-by. And far from being a nuisance, as some people may think, intruders into what they have conceived as a one-on-one tryst with nature, villages are a network of shelter, support and even entertainment.

At the very least, and most basic, they prevent you from having to carry your bed along with three days of food and water on your back: because you know you can spend the night in an inn – and store up new provisions the next morning!

3. German country towns



German cities are far from world class. Germany is the largest and wealthiest country in Western Europe, but Berlin is no match for London or Paris – or even for Barcelona and Rome. And let's not even start with places such as Hanover or Cologne.

German cities look as though they had all been built at the same time by the same guys, following the same recipe, after some major catastrophe had erased nearly everything which dates further back than, say, the 1950s. ***Which is, of course, exactly what happened.***

Many of Germany's small towns, on the other hand, are great. They were spared the devastations of WWII, because they were not important enough to merit the expense of a large-scale air assault, and they are spared the devastations of modern tourism because they are not fancy

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enough to merit the expenses of a three-day break.

And you can find interesting and pretty towns virtually anywhere: every area of Germany has at least one or two. ***Treasures await!***

4. Germany's nature is not half bad either



You will be surprised at the variety on offer: there is the sea and there are the Alps, there are lakes, dramatic rock formations, majestic rivers, peaceful valleys, forests, meadows. And you know what's best? That all of this is easily accessible, thanks to:



5. Germany's public transport network

Fine, there are exceptions, there are some remote regions, too, small towns and villages where one bus goes out early in the morning and one bus brings the commuters home at 6 pm with precious little in between, but these are really exceptions whereas in much of the European countryside, this is the norm.

In general, all stage posts of German hiking trails are accessible by public transport, so you can start and end your hiking in Germany anywhere in the knowledge that the next major country town – hotels! cinemas! restaurants! – is only a short ride away. What more can you ask for? ***Well, how about this?***

6. No dangerous wildlife

No wolves, no cougars, and definitely no bears. And if you don't think that's a plus, just talk to anyone of a slightly nervous disposition who has ever been hiking in North America, particularly on the Western side of the continent, where *Ursus Horribilis*, I believe, is feeling slightly peckish tonight. ***(Hey, wait a minute, isn't that your tent he is heading for?)***

Are these not reasons enough to entice you to spend your next holiday and go easy hiking in Germany?

When travelling to Germany, ensure you are well covered with the right single trip travel insurance policy.

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